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First National Bank Linnton letter

William Bowes

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July 13, 1925.

Mr. Sinclair A. Wilson,
President, First National Bank of Linnton,
Linnton, Oregon.

Dear Sir:

I have your letter of the 10th in regard to the plans and development of Front Street.

There is no question about the plan, as you have mentioned in your letter, and it is the only plan that will permit property owners along Front Street to keep their property and develop it economically.

From the water to practically the line of Second Street there have been no new buildings built in a quarter of a century. The buildings that now occupy the ground are entirely inadequate for modern business, therefore, rentals are at a very low ebb. Many property owners are not receiving sufficient from them to pay their taxes, but we always find opposition from this class of owners to any project that means expenditure of large sums of money. They realize their property is a liability at the present time, but they hesitate to spend more money to bring it to a paying basis.

I am fully alive to the large development of the City of Portland. I believe our city will continue to grow and develop irrespective of a certain group of people who are crying about heavy taxes, and trying to discredit public officials when they try to do the big thing, however, you will agree with me that public officials cannot move faster nor think faster than the public, and it is through such men as you who see the possibility of development that public sentiment must be molded, so that city officials may feel that their efforts are being appreciated, and it is necessary for the forward looking business men of the community to do as you have done - approve the efforts of the public officials - and in this way public sentiment will be turned from criticism to approval.

The present City Council is endeavoring to do the big things that they see are necessary to be done in keeping with the progress of a big city. When you realize that in the last four years property owners have practically spent one hundred millions for buildings in the City of Portland, and about ten

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Front St.

millions in streets and sewers, we can begin to realize that the citizens of our great City believe in Portland, when they are willing to bond themselves to the last dollar in order to get the necessary improvements, however, these improvements are largely on the East Side, where it is estimated 75% or more of the people reside.

The West Side, which was once the great City of Portland, seems to have dropped into a rut, and permitted business to move from the West Side to the East Side. These business interests have moved there because of the better facilities for transacting business on the East Side than on the West Side. I have been told by some of the Front Street merchants that their cartage bills for hauling to and from the Street was approximately as much as their rent was. It has almost become a necessity, regardless of expense, to improve Front Street so as to provide proper facilities for the transaction of business, and if this is not done the business will move to the East Side, where traffic and transportation is at their command.

Again I thank you for taking the time to express your appreciation of one of the big things we are trying to do to re-claim the West Side business district. I know this district like a book; was on the Street 25 years, and there has not been a new board placed on the Street during that time, and I trust this first move to re-claim Front Street property will recieve the hearty cooperation of business interest that are progressive in the City of Portland.

Yours very truly,

COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS.

ALB:JP